

Trinity Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A

[Ex. 34:4-6, 8-9; 2 Cor. 13:11-13; Jn. 3:16-18]

Excerpts of Pope Francis - Angelus- 04 June 2023

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31 MAY 2026

Brothers and sisters, as you heard, Jesus *is having a* dialogue with Nicodemus (cf. *Jn 3:16-18*). *Who is Nicodemus? He is* a member of the Sanhedrin, *a Jewish legislative and judicial assembly*. Nicodemus is passionate about the mystery of God. He recognizes in Jesus a divine master and goes to speak to him in secret, at night. Jesus listens to him, understands he is a man on a quest, and then first, he surprises him, answering that in order to enter the Kingdom of God, one must be reborn.

Then, he reveals the heart of the mystery to him, saying that God loved humanity so much that he sent his Son into the world. Jesus, therefore, the Son, speaks to us about his Father and his immense love. *Father and Son*. It is a familiar image which, if we think about it, disrupts **our** images of God. Indeed, the very word “God” suggests to us a singular, majestic and distant reality, whereas hearing about a Father and a Son brings us back home.

Yes, we can think of God in this way, through the image of a *family gathered around the table*, where life is shared. After all, the table, which, at the same time is an altar, is a symbol with which certain icons depict the Trinity. It is an image that speaks to us of a *God of communion*. Father, Son and Holy Spirit: *communion*. But it is not only an image; it is reality! It is reality because the Holy Spirit, the Spirit that the Father poured into our hearts through Jesus (cf. *Gal 4:6*), makes us taste, makes us savour God’s presence.

It is a presence that is always close, compassionate. The Holy Spirit does with us what Jesus does with Nicodemus: he introduces us to the mystery of new birth, the birth of faith, of Christian life. He reveals the heart of the Father to us, and he makes us partake in God’s very life. We could say that the invitation he extends to us is to sit at the table with God to share in his love. This is the image.

This is what happens at every Mass, at the altar of the Eucharistic table, where Jesus offers himself to the Father and offers himself for us. Yes, that is how it is, our God is a *communion of love*: and this is how Jesus revealed him to us. And do you know how we can remember this? With the simplest gesture, which we learned as children: the sign of the cross. By tracing the cross on our body, we remind ourselves how much God loved us, to the point of giving his life for us; and we repeat to ourselves that his love envelops us completely, from top to bottom, from left to right, like an embrace that never abandons us.

And at the same time, we commit ourselves to bear witness to God-as-love, creating communion in his name.

Do you know many times we make the sign of the cross during mass? Once at the beginning and end of mass, before the Gospel: we trace three small crosses (on the forehead, lips, and heart) while praying silently that God's word stays in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. So that is officially 5 times. But we can add other times as optional. Each time you genuflect you can simultaneously make a sign of the cross which should be done when you enter and leave the pew. Entering and leaving church, one makes the sign of the cross with Holy Water. That makes it seven times. We can add more, but that goes with personal preference.

Today, then, we can ask ourselves: do we bear witness to God-as-love? Or has God-as-love become in turn a concept, something we have already heard, that no longer stirs nor provokes life? If God is love, do our communities bear witness to this? Do they know how to love? Do our communities know how to love? And our family, do we know how to love in the family? Do we always leave the door open, do we know how to welcome everyone as brothers and sisters? Do we offer everyone the food of God's forgiveness and Gospel joy? Does one breathe the air of home, or do we resemble more closely an office or a reserved place where only the elect can enter?

God is love, God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and he gave his life for us. This is why we make the sign of the cross.

Today, May 31st, is also the Feast of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary. And so, we can ask Mary to help us to experience the Church as **that home** of familial love, for the glory of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.